Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125773

FOR ARA DEPUTY ASS'T SEC. BUSHNELL & HEWITT

FOL RPT SANTO DOMINGO 2630 ACTION SECSTATE USCINCSO QUARRY
HGTS CZ INFO PORT AU PRINCE 17 MAY 78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2630

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: APPARENT INTERVENTION OF ARMED FORCES IN VOTE COUNT

1. EMBASSY MONITOR OF POLICE FREQUENCES INDICATES VOTE COUNTING THROUGHOUT COUNTRY CONTINUES. JUNTA CENTRAL ELECTORAL SOURCES, NOT ALTOGETHER RELIABLE, ALSO CLAIM COUNT IN THE CAPITAL WOULD CONTINUE. ARMED FORCES AT 10 AM ANNOUNCED THAT CONTRARY TO RUMORS, THERE HAS BEEN NO REPEAT NO COUP D'ETAT. SUCH RUMORS, THE BULLETIN SAID, ARE BEING CIRCULATED BY ENEMIES OF PUBLIC ORDER AND THAT THE ARMED FORCES WOULD ABIDE BY THEIR CONSITIUTIONAL OBLIGATIONS.

2. FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT PUBLIC COUNT OF VOTE STOPPED IN PRE-DAWN HOURS, JCE HEADQUARTERS VACATED SOMETIMES AROUND 4 A.M. BY MILITARY FORCES, AND EMPTY BUILDING NOW UNDER ARMY CUSTODY.
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WE UNDERSTAND OTHER JCE DISTRICT OFFICES INTERVENED AND SHUT DOWM. JCE NATIONAL PRESIDENT CASTILLO HAS DISAPPEARED FROM SIGHT, AS HAVE HIS COLLEAGUES ON JUNTA, AND REPORTS PERSIST THAT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN PROCESS CONSTITUTES DE FACTO COUP D'ETAT, SINCE IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED PRD PRESIDENTIAL TICKET WAS FAR OUTDISTANCING PRESIDENT BALAGUER.

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3. SIGNS GROW THAT EARLY MORNING INTERRUPTION OF PUBLIC VOTE COUNT WAS IMPROVISED REACTION TO REFORMISTA POLL-WATCHER TALLIES, SHOWING PRD TICKET RUNNING MORE THAN 2-1 IN NATIONAL DISTRICT AND MOST OTHER IMPORTANT CITIES IN THE FETION.

4. RURAL RETURNS, WHICH WERE 2-1 THE OTHER WAY REFLECTING BALAGUER'S STRENGTH AMONG CAMPESINOS, WERE COMING IN TOO SLOWLY AND LARGE LEADS OF PRD IN THE CITIES WOULD HAVE PANICKED THE GENERALS. WE HAVE REPORTS OF POST-MIDNIGHT MEETINGS IN NATIONAL PALACE, IN WHICH BALAGUER REMAINED SILENT AS HIGH MILITARY OFFICERS, LED BY NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF NIVAR, VOWED NEVER TO LET PRD COME TO POWER. HIS SILENCE COULD HAVE ENCOURAGED HASTY RESORT TO FORCE MAJEUR.

5. ALL THROUGH EARLY EVENING, EMBASSY RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM MILITARY THE PROCESS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PLAY OUT WITHOUT INTERFERENCE, BUT THAT WAS BEFORE PRD BEGAN ROLLING UP BIG URBAN VOTE. REFORMISTA POLL-WATCHERS, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTED TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS AS OF 11 P.M. THAT THE PRESIDENT TRAILED PRD TICKET BY 112,000 VOTES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL, AND WAS DOING PROPORTIONATELY AS POORLY IN OTHER TOWNS AND CITIES. PRD'S POLL-WATCHING TALLIES WHICH EMBASSY RECEIVED IN EARLY MORING HOURS WERE RUNNING BEHIND REFORMISTA COUNT, BUT TREND WAS THE SAME, ONE AND A HALF TO TWO TO ONE.

6. IN WELTER OF RUMORS IN HIGHLY CHARGED SITUATION, THE CAPITAL
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HAS REMAINED CALM. NO TROOPS ARE SEEN CONCENTRATING IN KEY LOCATIONS AND ARMED FORCES APPEAR TO REMAIN IN THEIR BARRACKS WHILE MEETINGS AMONG TOP GOVERNMENT LEADERS CONTINUE. PEOPLE ARE STAYING HOME AND RADIO-TV PLAYING SOLEMN MUSIC AND SHOWING CANNED FILMS.

7. PRD, MEANWHILE, PLAYING THE SITUATION WITH CONSIDERABLE COOLNESS. PARTY PRESIDENT JORGE BLANCO HELD 9 A.M. PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH HE ANNOUNCED PARTY'S TALLY OF NATIONAL DISTRICT VOTE GAVE PRD 380,000 TO 100,000 FOR REFORMISTA TICKET. FIGURES HE TALLIED OF RETURNS FROM INTERIOR HAD HIS PARTY AT LEAST 2-1 AHEAD OF BALAGUER'S TICKET. HIS CALM AND MEASURED CLAIM OF VICTORY FOR PRD NOT INCITEFUL. PARTY SECGEN PENA GOMEZ AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS ARE OUT OF SIGHT AND SAID TO BE LAYING LOW.

8. WILL REPORT BY CABLE OR PHONE AS DEVELOPMENTS WARRANT.
YOST

UNQUOTE VANCE

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